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Justice Dept., Congress probing Trump seizures of Dems' data

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department's internal watchdog launched an investigation Friday after revelations that former President Donald Trump's administration secretly seized phone data from at least two House Democrats as part of an aggressive leaks probe. Democrats called the seizures "harrowing" and an abuse of power. The announcement by Inspector General Michael Horowitz came shortly after Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco made the request for an internal investigation. Horowitz said he would examine whether the data subpoenaed by the Justice Department and turned over by Apple followed department policy and "whether any such uses, or the investigations, were based upon improper considerations."

Horowitz said he would also investigate similar Trump-era seizures of journalists' phone records.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and another Democratic member of the panel, California Rep. Eric Swalwell, said Apple notified them last month that their metadata had been subpoenaed and turned over to the Justice Department in 2018, as their committee was investigating the former president's ties to Russia. Schiff was then the top Democrat on the panel, which was led by Republicans.



In this May 9, 2019 file photo, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, accompanied by Attorney General William Barr, right, speaks during a farewell ceremony for Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein in the Great Hall at the Department of Justice in Washington.

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Associated Press

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MONDAY ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 TO 8:30	TUESDAY JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 TO 8:30	WEDNESDAY PAULA RIDDERSTAP SINGER 6:30 TO 8:30 KARAOKE / HAPPY HOUR / 9:00 TO 11:00	THURSDAY RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 TO 9:00
FRIDAY RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 TO 9:00	SATURDAY ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 TO 8:30	SUNDAY TICO KOCK STEEL PAN PLAYER 4:00 TO 6:00 PAULA RIDDERSTAP / SINGER / 6:30 TO 8:30	DAILY HAPPY HOUR 12 TO 1 / 4 TO 6 / 9 TO 10

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Justice Dept., Congress probing Trump seizures of Dems' data

Continued from Front

While the Justice Department routinely investigates leaked information, including classified intelligence, subpoenaing the private information of members of Congress is extraordinarily rare. The disclosures, first reported by The New York Times, raise questions about what the Justice Department's justification was for spying on another branch of government and whether it was done for political reasons.

In a statement, White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates said the Trump administration's conduct is "shocking" and "clearly fits within an appalling trend that represents the opposite of how authority should be used."

Bates said one of President Joe Biden's top reasons for seeking the presidency was "his predecessor's unjustifiable abuses of power, including the repugnant ways he tried to force his political interests upon the Department of Justice."

The Trump administration's secretive move to gain access to the data came as the president was fuming publicly and privately over investigations — in Congress and by then-special counsel Robert Mueller — into his campaign's ties to Russia. Trump called the probes a "witch hunt," regularly criticized Democrats and Mueller on Twitter and dismissed as "fake news" leaks he found harmful to his agenda. As the investigations swirled around him, he demanded loyalty from a Justice Department he often regarded as his personal law firm.

Swalwell and Schiff were two of the most visible Democrats on the committee during the Russia probe, making frequent appearances on cable news. Trump watched those channels closely, if not obsessively, and seethed over the coverage.

Schiff said the seizures suggest "the weaponization of law enforcement by a corrupt president" and urged



In this May 28, 2019 file photo, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., left, and Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., speak with members of the media on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

the Justice Department to do "a full damage assessment of the conduct of the department over the last four years."

Senate Democratic leaders immediately demanded that former Attorneys General Bill Barr and Jeff Sessions, who both oversaw Trump's leak probes, testify about the secret subpoenas. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin said in a statement that "this appalling politicization of the Department of Justice by Donald Trump and his sycophants" must be investigated. They said Barr and Sessions are subject to a subpoena if they refuse. Prosecutors from Trump's Justice Department had subpoenaed Apple for the data, according to a committee official and two other people familiar with the matter.

The records of at least 12 people connected to the intelligence panel were eventually shared by the company, including aides, former aides and family

members. One was a minor.

Apple informed the committee last month that the records had been shared and that the investigation had been closed, but did not give extensive detail. The committee official and the two others with knowledge of the data seizures were granted anonymity to discuss them.

The Justice Department obtained the metadata — often records of calls, texts and locations — but not other content from the devices, like photos, messages or emails, according to one of the people. Another said that Apple complied with the subpoena, providing the information to the Justice Department, but did not immediately notify the members of Congress or the committee about the disclosure.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a statement that the data seizures "appear to be yet another egregious assault on our democracy" by the former president.

"The news about the po-

liticization of the Trump Administration Justice Department is harrowing," she said.

The committee official said the House intelligence panel will ask Apple to look into whether additional lawmakers were targeted. The Justice Department has not been forthcoming on questions such as whether the investigation was properly predicated and whether it only focused on Democrats, the official said.

It is unclear why Trump's Justice Department would have targeted a minor as part of the probe. Swalwell, confirming that he was told his records were seized, told CNN on Thursday night that he was aware a minor was involved and believed that person was "targeted punitively and not for any reason in law."

The Senate Intelligence Committee was not similarly targeted, according to a fourth person who was aware of the probe and granted anonymity to discuss it.

There's no indication that the Justice Department

used the records to prosecute anyone. After some information related to the Russia investigation was declassified and made public during the later years of the Trump administration, some of the prosecutors were concerned that even if they could bring a leak case, conviction would be unlikely, one of the people said.

Federal agents questioned at least one former committee staff member in 2020, the person said, and ultimately, prosecutors weren't able to substantiate a case.

The news follows revelations that the Justice Department had secretly seized phone records belonging to reporters at The New York Times, The Washington Post and CNN as part of criminal leak investigations. Following an outcry from press freedom organizations, the Justice Department announced last week that it would cease the practice of going after journalists' sourcing information. □

'We mean it': FBI takes on sexual misconduct in its ranks

By JIM MUSTIAN and
ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Faced with a #MeToo reckoning, the FBI says it is getting serious about sexual harassment in its ranks, starting a 24/7 tip line, doing more to help accusers and taking a tougher stand against agents found to have committed misconduct.

The changes follow Associated Press reporting last year that found a series of sexual assault and harassment allegations against senior officials who were allowed to quietly avoid discipline and retire or transfer even after the claims were substantiated.

FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate told the AP that the bureau is sending its strongest message ever that employees who are tempted to engage in sexual misconduct should be scared because if they do so, "we're coming for them." "That's a strong approach, a forceful shift and we mean it. And it's coming from the top," Abbate said. "Individuals who engage in this type of misconduct don't belong in the FBI and they certainly should not have supervisory oversight of others. Period." Among the changes FBI officials detailed to AP in a series of recent interviews was a round-the-clock tip line that provides a centralized mechanism to report abuse, though they would not say how many calls



In this Monday, June 7, 2021, file photo, FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate speaks at a news conference at the Justice Department in Washington.

it has received. They also cited a working group of senior executives to review policies and procedures on harassment and victim support, and faster action to investigate allegations and fire or at least demote employees found to have engaged in misconduct to ensure they have no path to management.

To address chronic concerns that the FBI makes it difficult and intimidating for victims to come forward, the bureau is more broadly spreading the word in online and internal communications about where victimized employees can report allegations. And the FBI's Victim Services Division, which until recently

had focused on aiding victims of federal crimes outside the bureau, has been extending the same level of support to employees who are victims of internal misconduct.

"This is a huge change because traditionally the division was just outward facing supporting victims of federal crime," said Regina Thompson, the assistant director in charge of the Victim Services Division. "So this has been a big change to turn the subject matter expert expertise that we have internally, and be able to provide this optional, but tailored, assistance to employees."

Advocates of combating sexual abuse greeted the

bureau's changes with skepticism, calling them long overdue — coming years after the advent of the #MeToo movement — and unlikely to affect lasting change.

"Everyone has gone through this, including the military, and the bureau has managed to skate," said Jane Turner, a former longtime FBI agent who in 1983 became the first woman named head of an FBI resident agency.

"Until the FBI charges these people and throws them in jail — or at least out of the FBI — and the message gets out that you can't do this, it won't stop," said Turner, who now works with the National Whistleblower

Center. "It's going to take a total cultural shift."

FBI officials insist sexual misconduct allegations represent a narrow snapshot of the roughly 35,000-member workforce. But the cases that have been identified — by the AP and also by the Justice Department's internal watchdog — have exposed accountability gaps and startlingly bad behavior.

An AP investigation last year found that several senior FBI officials have avoided discipline — quietly transferring or retiring with full benefits — even after claims of sexual misconduct against them were substantiated.

That includes James Hendricks, the former top agent in Albany, New York, who was alleged to have sexually harassed eight female subordinates, including by asking one to have sex in a conference room. An assistant director also retired after he was accused of drunkenly groping a female colleague in a stairwell.

Those incidents come on top of a class-action lawsuit alleging systemic sexual harassment at the FBI's training academy in Quantico, Virginia.

And just last month, the Office of Inspector General released a new report to AP alleging an assistant special agent in charge groped a female colleague at an after-work event — a sexual assault captured on surveillance video. □

VP Harris making Southern stops to promote vaccination

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris and the Biden administration's top environmental official are making stops in several Southern states to promote an intensive White House coronavirus vaccination effort.

On Friday, the White House announced that Harris will visit Greenville, South Carolina, on Monday, to be fol-

lowed by a June 18 visit to Atlanta. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan plans to make Tuesday stops in Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Details of the trips were not released.

The visits mark the launch of a national tour that's part of the White House's "month of action," announced by President Joe Biden last week to urge

more Americans to get vaccinated before the July 4 holiday.

The effort includes an early summer sprint of incentives and a slew of new steps to ease barriers and make the vaccines more appealing to those who haven't received them. It's aimed at helping the president close in on his goal of getting 70% of adults at least partially vaccinated by Independence Day. □



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to the media, Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at the Sofitel Mexico City Reforma in Mexico City. Associated Press

Oregon GOP legislator ousted over state Capitol breach

By **ANDREW SELSKY**

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Republican lawmakers voted with majority Democrats in the Oregon House of Representatives to take the historic step of expelling a Republican member who let violent, far-right protesters into the state Capitol on Dec. 21.

Legislators said on the House floor that this could be the most important vote they ever cast. They then proceeded Thursday night to expel an unapologetic Rep. Mike Nearman with a 59-1 vote, marking the first time a member has been expelled by the House in its 160-year history. The only vote against the resolution for expulsion was Nearman's own.

"The facts are clear that Mr. Nearman unapologetically coordinated and planned a breach of the Oregon State Capitol," House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Democrat, said after the vote. "His actions were blatant and deliberate, and he has shown no remorse for jeopardizing the safety of every person in the Capitol that day."

Rep. Paul Holvey, a Democrat who chaired a committee that earlier Thursday unanimously recommended Nearman's expulsion, reminded lawmakers of the events of Dec. 21, which were an eerie foreshadowing of the much more seri-



Rep. Mike Nearman leaves the House of Representatives after the vote to expel him at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem, Ore., on Thursday, June 10, 2021.

ous Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

"On the morning of Dec. 21st, a couple hundred protesters — some of them heavily armed and wearing body armor — arrived at the Capitol for a protest, with the intent to illegally enter and presumably occupy the building and interrupt the proceedings of the Oregon Legislature," Holvey said. "Staff and legislators were terrified. We can only speculate what would have happened if they were able to get all the way in."

Nearman said he let the protesters in because he believes the Capitol, which

has been closed to the public to protect against spread of the coronavirus, should have been open. The assault happened during a peak of the pandemic.

But even Republicans, who are often bitterly opposed to Democratic initiatives on climate change and some other bills, said the crowd outside the Capitol that day was not made up of constituents who wanted to peacefully engage in the democratic process.

Some were carrying guns. Some shouted false QAnon conspiracy theories about Democrats kidnapping babies. They carried

American flags, banners for former President Donald Trump and a sign calling for the arrest of Democratic Gov. Kate Brown. They broke windows and assaulted journalists.

"Nobody should have opened the door to the people who were here that day," said Rep. Daniel Bonham, a Republican and a member Holvey's special committee.

The final straw for Republican House members came on June 4, when video emerged showing Nearman choreographing how he would let protesters into the Capitol a few days before it actually happened.

Associated Press

For his fellow lawmakers, that was proof it was a premeditated act, which Nearman acknowledged. All 22 of his fellow House Republicans wrote him on Monday, strongly recommending he resign.

As lawmakers decided Nearman's fate, a few dozen people waving American flags and one carrying a sign saying "I am Mike Nearman" gathered outside the Capitol. One repeatedly kicked a metal door, sending booms through a marble hallway of the building.

Nearman was seen on security video opening a door to protesters on Dec. 21 as lawmakers met in emergency session to deal with economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Protesters barged into the building, which was closed to the public because of coronavirus safety protocols, got into shoving matches with police and sprayed officers with bear spray.

"It's impossible to overstate the seriousness of the reason we are here today," Holvey said during the committee hearing. "Rep. Nearman enabled armed, violent protesters to enter the Capitol, breaching the security of the Capitol, which was officially closed to the public, and also endangered the authorized staff and legislators inside the building." □



In this Feb. 26, 2015, file photo, a full-scale mock-up of a high-speed train is displayed at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif.

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The federal government has reached an agreement to restore nearly \$1 billion in funding for California's troubled bullet

train, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced.

The U.S. Department of Transportation finalized settlement negotiations to restore the money for

U.S. will restore \$1B for California's troubled bullet train

the high-speed rail project that was revoked by the Trump administration in 2019, Newsom said Thursday night.

The restoration of \$929 million in grant funding "will continue to spur job creation, advance the project and move the state one step closer to getting trains running in California as soon as possible," Newsom said in a statement.

California voters in 2008 approved nearly \$10 billion in bond money to

build a high-speed rail line connecting Los Angeles and San Francisco that was supposed to be running by 2020.

But the project was plagued by cost overruns and delays. Officials now hope to have trains running on a segment through the state's central valley agricultural region by 2029.

Critics have derided the segment as a "train to nowhere," but supporters say it's a necessary test and

precursor to linking more populated areas.

The project's business plan anticipates environmental approval for the 500 miles (805 kilometers) between Los Angeles and San Francisco by 2023. Completion of the full line depends on funding and other unknowns.

Newsom last month unveiled a budget proposal that includes \$4.2 billion for the project, including the bond money approved by voters in 2008. □

Hungary: Bill would ban 'promoting' homosexuality to minors

By BELA SZANDELSZKY and VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP)

— Hungary's governing conservative party has prepared new legislation that bans showing pornographic material and any content portraying or promoting sex reassignment or homosexuality to anyone under 18. Fidesz, the party of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, described the legislation as part of an effort to protect children from pedophilia. But LGBT rights activists denounced the bills as discriminatory, with some comparing the proposed legislation to a 2013 Russian law banning gay "propaganda." Human rights groups have described the Russian law as a tool of discrimination and harassment. "These proposals, which have dark echoes of Russia's anti-gay 'propaganda law,' will further stigmatize LGBTI people, exposing them to greater discrimination in what is already a hostile environment," said David Vig, director of Amnesty International Hungary. He used the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Fidesz submitted the leg-



In this Thursday, April 1, 2021 file photo, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban, speaks during a joint press conference in Budapest, Hungary.

islation to the Hungarian Parliament on Thursday. It includes a measure aimed at fighting child abuse along with various amendments prohibiting transmitting information about LGBT people or same-sex relationships. The bills are scheduled to be debated Monday and to be voted on Tuesday. They are expected to pass easily given that Fidesz has a majority in parliament. "Tagging these amend-

ments to a bill that seeks to crack down on child abuse appears to be a deliberate attempt by the Hungarian government to conflate pedophilia with LGBTI people," Vig said Friday. Luca Dudits, an executive board member with the Háttér Society, a Budapest-based LGBT rights group, said there is no similar law anywhere in the European Union "that is so hostile" to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

"We are very worried about the outcome," Dudits told The Associated Press by phone. Gabriella Selmeczi, a lawmaker with Fidesz who is among those who introduced the legislation, denied that it is discriminatory or anti-liberal. "True liberalism is when children are left alone with questions about their sexual orientation until the age of 18," she said. Orban's government in the past has depicted migrants

as a grave threat to Hungary and the nation's Christian identity, a theme the prime minister has successfully used to win past elections. With the next elections scheduled for 2022, and fewer migrants entering Europe, the ruling party has increasingly depicted the LGBT rights movement as a threat.

Human Rights Watch denounced the legislation, saying that "Orban's government has sought to scapegoat LGBT people as part of a wider strategy to sidestep human rights obligations and cement Orban's brand of authoritarianism." The legislation prohibits making pornographic content available to anyone under the age of 18, "as well as content that depicts sexuality for its own sake, or promotes or displays deviations from the identity of the sex of birth, gender reassignment or homosexuality." The ban also applies to advertisements and education.

Marton Pal, a representative of the Foundation for Rainbow Families who has adopted children with his same-sex partner, described his shock at learning of the new bills on Thursday. □

Associated Press

South Africa finalizes treaty to extradite fugitives in UAE

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME
Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africa said Friday it has finalized an extradition treaty with United Arab Emirates that would allow

it to bring back members of an Indian family accused of involvement in high-level state corruption to face trial. Brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh Gupta are believed

to be living in Dubai after hastily leaving South Africa around the same time former President Jacob Zuma resigned in 2018 amid allegations he had overseen massive levels of corruption at state-owned companies.

The Guptas are accused of using their association with Zuma to cash in on huge government contracts and kickbacks, and were believed to be so influential they had a say in Zuma's appointment of Cabinet ministers.

The U.S. Treasury Department placed the three Gupta brothers on a sanctions list in 2019, accusing them of being "members of a significant corruption network." That forbids U.S.

entities from conducting business with them or handling their assets.

Zuma was president from 2009 until he was forced to step down by his African National Congress Party amid the graft scandal. He is currently on trial for corruption related to another huge government contract before he was president, while his allegedly corrupt relationship with the Guptas is being investigated in an ongoing commission of inquiry in South Africa.

Witnesses at the inquiry have testified how the Guptas' Johannesburg mansion became a meeting place for senior government ministers and bosses of state-owned

companies during the Zuma years, and those officials sometimes left with bags of money.

South African Justice Minister Ronald Lamola said Friday the process of extraditing the Guptas could become a lengthy legal battle.

"We should not expect that the people of interest will board a plane to South Africa first thing tomorrow morning," he said.

The extradition treaty will come into effect on July 10, Lamola said.

South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority has approached Interpol to assist in the execution of arrest warrants for the Guptas. □



In this Sept. 2010 file photo, Atul Gupta, of the Gupta family, is seen outside magistrates courts in Johannesburg.

Associated Press

Ex-Mossad chief signals Israel attacked Iran nuclear assets

By JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The outgoing chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence service has offered the closest acknowledgment yet his country was behind recent attacks targeting Iran's nuclear program and a military scientist.

The comments by Yossi Cohen, speaking to Israel's Channel 12 investigative program "Uvda" in a segment aired Thursday night, offered an extraordinary debriefing by the head of the typically secretive agency in what appears to be the final days of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule.

It also gave a clear warning to other scientists in Iran's nuclear program that they too could become targets for assassination even as diplomats in Vienna try to negotiate terms to try to salvage its atomic accord with world powers.

"If the scientist is willing to change career and will not hurt us anymore, than yes, sometimes we offer them" a way out, Cohen said.

Among the major attacks to target Iran, none have struck deeper than two



In this July 3, 2016, file photo, Yossi Cohen, then the director of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, attends the funeral in Jerusalem of a rabbi killed by Palestinian gunmen.

Associated Press

explosions over the last year at its Natanz nuclear facility. There, centrifuges enrich uranium from an underground hall designed to protect them from airstrikes. In July 2020, a mysterious explosion tore apart Natanz's advanced centrifuge assembly, which Iran later blamed on Israel. Then in April of this year, another blast tore apart one of its underground enrichment halls.

Discussing Natanz, the interviewer asked Cohen where he'd take them if they could travel there, he said "to the cellar" where "the centrifuges used to spin." "It doesn't look like it used to look," he added. Cohen did not directly claim the attacks, but his specificity offered the closest acknowledgement yet of an Israeli hand in the attacks. The interviewer, journalist Ilana Dayan,

also seemingly offered a detailed description in a voiceover of how Israel snuck the explosives into Natanz's underground halls.

"The man who was responsible for these explosions, it becomes clear, made sure to supply to the Iranians the marble foundation on which the centrifuges are placed," Dayan said. "As they install this foundation within the Natanz facility,

they have no idea that it already includes an enormous amount of explosives."

They also discussed the November killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, an Iranian scientist who began Tehran's military nuclear program decades ago. U.S. intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency believe Iran abandoned that organized effort at seeking a nuclear weapon in 2003. Iran long has maintained its program is peaceful.

While Cohen on camera doesn't claim the killing, Dayan in the segment described Cohen as having "personally signed off on the entire campaign." Dayan also described how a remotely operated machine gun fixed to a pickup truck killed Fakhrizadeh and later self-destructed.

Cohen described an Israeli effort to dissuade Iranian scientists from taking part in the program, which had seen some abandon their work after being warned, even indirectly, by Israel. Asked by the interviewer if the scientists understood the implications if they didn't stop, Cohen said: "They see their friends." □

WHO, UNICEF declare end of polio outbreak in the Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— A polio outbreak in the Philippines has ended, according to the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, which praised government efforts to fight the disease despite the coronavirus pandemic.

The U.N. agencies said in a joint statement on Friday that the Philippine Department of Health concluded its response to the polio outbreak on June 3 after no cases were detected for 16 months following a massive immunization campaign and surveillance.

Philippine health officials announced that polio had re-emerged in the country in September 2019, nearly two decades after the WHO had declared the

Southeast Asian nation free of the viral disease, which can cause paralysis and death. There is no known cure.



In this Sept. 20, 2019 photo, a baby gets an oral anti-polio vaccine during the launch of a campaign to end the resurgence of polio after health authorities confirmed a polio case in the country in Quezon city, Philippines.

Associated Press

which can cause paralysis and death. There is no known cure.

officials, backed by the WHO and UNICEF, then considerably expanded an anti-polio campaign which continued despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. About 30 million doses of oral polio vaccine were administered to children across the Philippines.

"This is a major win for public health and is an excellent example of what collective efforts can attain, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Rabindra Abeyasinghe, who represents the WHO in the Philippines.

The polio immunization drive also faced a scare involving another vaccine. The government's immunization programs were marred in 2017 by a dengue fever vaccine made

by French drug maker Sanofi Pasteur which some Philippine officials linked to the deaths of at least three children.

The government halted the dengue immunization drive after Sanofi said a study showed the vaccine may increase the risk of severe dengue infections. More than 830,000 children received the Dengvaxia vaccine under the campaign, which was launched in 2016 and halted in 2017.

Sanofi officials said the Dengvaxia vaccine was safe and would reduce dengue infections if the vaccination drive continued.

Philippine health officials have struggled to restore public trust in vaccines since then. □

Cambodia limits U.S. diplomat's scrutiny of controversial base

By SOPHENG CHEANG

Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—

Efforts by Cambodia to assuage U.S. concerns about China's right to use a naval base on the Gulf of Thailand suffered a setback Friday when an American diplomat invited to inspect it was allowed only limited access, according to the U.S. Embassy.

The embassy said Defense Attaché Col. Marcus M. Ferrara traveled to the Ream Naval Base in coordination with Cambodian authorities, but was denied full access to the facility, leading him to cut short his visit and ask for it to be rescheduled without any limits to what he could see.

Cambodian government spokesman Phay Siphon said Cambodia fulfilled its commitment to allow a visit as requested, and if U.S. officials were not satisfied, they could request another visit as long as it did not involve spying or violating Cambodian sovereignty. Officials of Cambodia's Defense Ministry hit back at



In this July 26, 2019, file photo, Cambodian navy crew members stand on a navy patrol boat at the Ream Naval Base in Sihanoukville, southwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Associated Press

the embassy's statement. "They are pretending. They should know that the kingdom has sovereignty and laws, but they have their hidden agendas for geopolitical gains," Gen. Nem Sowath, special adviser to Defense Minister Tea Banh,

was quoted as saying by Fresh News, a website close to the government. "What the embassy wrote has violated the truth." Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen agreed in a June 1 meeting with visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

Wendy Sherman to allow the embassy's defense attaché to make regular visits to the base, the embassy said in a statement. An earlier State Department statement about Sherman's visit said she expressed "serious concerns"

about China's military presence and construction of facilities at the base and sought clarification of why two U.S.-funded buildings there had been demolished without notification or explanation.

Sherman said a Chinese military base in Cambodia "would undermine its sovereignty, threaten regional security, and negatively impact U.S.-Cambodia relations," the statement said. Hun Sen and other Cambodian officials have consistently maintained that China has been given no special privileges at the base. Sherman later told journalists she had candid conversations with Hun Sen "about the direction the country is headed," including China's presence at Ream and Cambodia's human rights and "anti-democratic record." Hun Sen has been in power since 1985 and has a history of repression that in the past few years has focused on intimidation through the legal system of his critics and political opponents. □

Official: U.S. told Nicaragua it will respect vote -- if free

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A senior U.S. official said Thursday that less than two weeks ago, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Nicaragua's foreign minister that the Biden administration would respect the results of free and fair elections in November. But since then, the U.S. has seen Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega "unleash a wave of repression against political opponents and members of Nicaragua's civil society," Julie Chung, the acting U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, told reporters.

A day earlier, the U.S. Treasury Department slapped sanctions on four people close to Ortega, including his daughter and a top army official. The sanctions

followed the arrests of four potential opposition candidates for the presidency since last week.

Blinken was in Costa Rica on June 1 and 2 to meet with member countries of the Central America Integration System, and Chung said he talked with Nicaraguan Foreign Affairs Minister Denis Moncada.

"Secretary Blinken did speak to Foreign Minister Moncada and relayed that we want to see a free and fair elections," Chung said.

"The whole world would love to see free and fair elections in Nicaragua, and we would abide by the results of that if they were certified by an independent institution."

Ortega, and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, have been moving in the opposite direction ever

since, apparently clearing the field of his strongest opponents.

"As we inch towards election in November in Nicaragua, I think it's apparent Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo are fearful. They're fearful of losing, they're fearful of a free and fair, transparent system," Chung said. "They are fearful of losing their grip on power."

Murillo has struck a defiant tone this week, lashing out at foreign interference. She and Ortega have maintained that widespread anti-government protests in April 2019 were a coup attempt with foreign backing.

Chung said the efforts to push a change of course in Nicaragua are multilateral.

On Thursday, the European Parliament warned Ortega



In this March 21, 2019 file photo, Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega speaks next to first lady and Vice President Rosario Murillo during the inauguration ceremony of a highway overpass in Managua, Nicaragua.

Associated Press

in a letter that future cooperation with the European Union will depend on the country moving back toward democracy.

"The November elections are an opportunity to end and peacefully resolve Nicaragua's deep political crisis," the letter said. The EU similarly called for Ortega to change course Thursday. "The EU firmly

condemns the actions of the Nicaraguan authorities against opposition parties, media, journalists and other media workers, human rights defenders and civil society, including the systematic detention and arrest of potential presidential candidates and opposition leaders," the bloc said in a statement. □

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From A to Z

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Shulaika. The Holiday Inn Resort Aruba is flexible and details can be adjusted to your personal taste. "Picture yourself and your loved one on the turquoise blue ocean side where it feels as if the beach is all yours. Our resort has this great advantage to be able to offer our wedding guests their 'own corner' where they have the full bar area for themselves, located right on the wide beach." Holiday Inn Aruba Resorts stands out with their personal approach and upscale service and their Food & Beverage is known all over the island for its consistent quality, quite important on the day of your life. "After the night the resort has their wedding suite made up for you and this means awakening in the romance of the Caribbean sun next morning with the ocean and white-sanded beach stretching in front of you while you enjoy your breakfast." Three romantic wedding packages offer you amazing possibilities where you can be each other's sunshine under Aruba's beautiful blue skies and turquoise waters, witnessing your "I do's" in a very intimate ceremony (package My Sunshine) or make your special day unique with a group of 20 loved ones, to share the event where you promise to love and stay with each other forever and always with your inner circle (package Promises). If you would like to take it up a notch



then tie the knot where love transcends all barriers and all limits, let Holiday Inn Aruba Resort be the one to make this act of overflowing love happen in one of a kind way (package Love Unlimited). Important to mention is that Shulaika and her team are flexible and arrangements can be adjusted to fulfill your exact wishes.

All arrangements by the Holiday Inn Aruba Resort include marriage on the stunning beach with the services of a non-denominational minister, including a wedding certificate as a keepsake. Feel queen and king under the arch of squared bamboo or a circular arch with choice of drapery color and crystals, depending on your choice of package. The signing table, bridal bouquet, matching groom's boutonniere are all part of the life happening and a live musician, photographer and/or videographer are options to consider.

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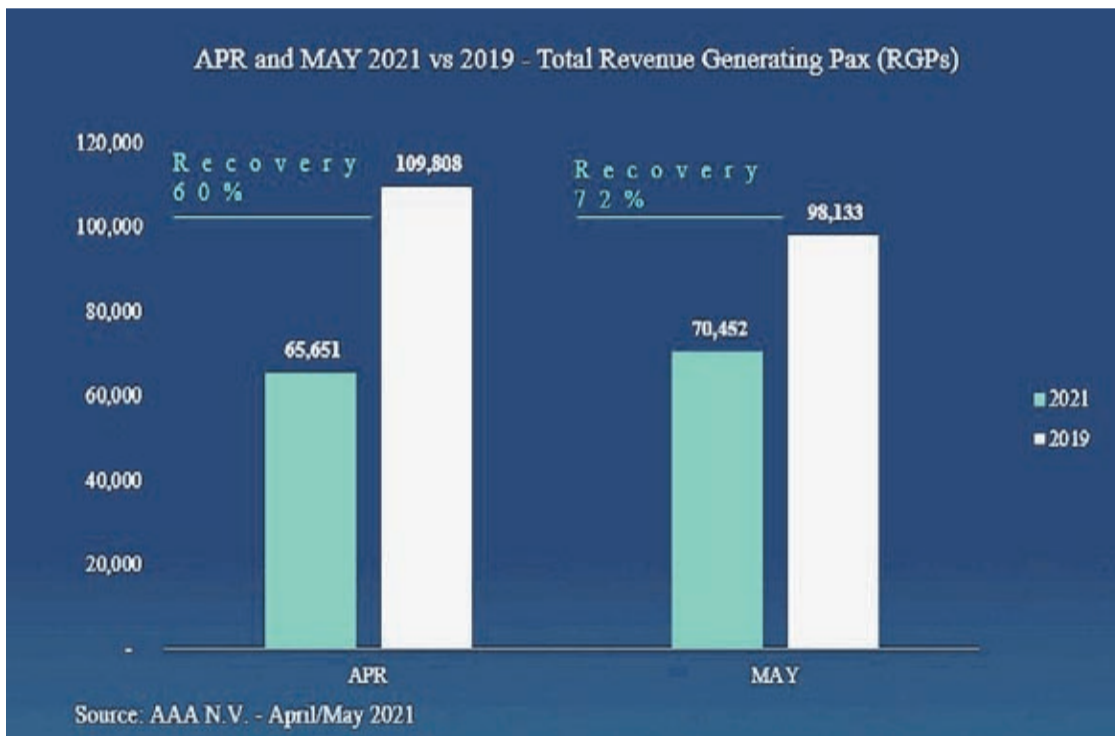


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AUA Airport recovered 65% of 2019 departing passenger amounts during April and May of 2021. 136,103 passengers departed in April and May 2021



ORANJESTAD – Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA) can report as follows on AUA Airport's performance for April and May of 2021; two outstanding months so far since the pandemic hit back in March of 2020.

In April and May of 2021, AUA Airport handled respectively 65,651 and 70,452 departing passengers. April was 40% more than March and May 7%

more than April. During the past two months AUA Airport recovered 65% of the amount of departing passenger that were handled in 2019 during those same months. In the months of April and May 2021 120,320 passengers (pax) travelled to the US, 7,131 pax to Europe, 2,468 pax to the Netherlands Antilles, and 6,184 pax to Latin America. The total departures during April and May are 69%

more than what was forecasted for this period.

An average outbound passenger load factor (PLF) (number of seats of the total seats on board an aircraft that are occupied when departing from AUA Airport) for the US Market of 71% (*) was reported during the months of April and May 2021, while the average PLF for all markets was at 68% during that same

period (in comparison to 2019 where an average PLF for all markets of 85% was reached). (*Excluding de-densification of aircraft carriers are no longer blocking seats on board)

During the past two months, AUA Airport averaged 23 flights per day, down from 35 daily flights during the same period in 2019. In that same period in 2020 AUA Airport only handled a total amount of 27 flights whilst

the national border was closed for commercial operations.

Based on the latest available insights AUA Airport now expects to recover 60% of its traffic for the year 2021 when comparing this to the year 2019 by reaching approximately 760K departing pax. This would mean an increase of 77% versus the year 2020 when we handled a total of 430K departing passengers. □



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Annual Statistics Digest 2020

ORANJESTAD — The Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) published the ANNUAL STATISTICAL DIGEST 2020 (ASD 2020). This statistical publication contains many economic, financial, and social data, including Aruba's financial, real, external, and public sectors. In addition, numerous charts are available for the published data, which are very useful for economic financial analysis and for policy recommendations.

The ASD 2020 is available on the website of the CBA (www.cbaruba.org) as from today. For any questions or comments on this publication, please can contact the Statistics Department of the CBA. □

The Governor awards Royal Ribbon to Mr. Gerrit Griffith



ORANJESTAD — The Governor of Aruba, His Excellency Alfonso Boekhoudt, presented the Royal Ribbon to Mr. Griffith at Cas Ceremonial di Gobernador in the context of his appointment as Member in the Order of Orange-Nassau.

Mr Griffith was unable to be present at the Ribbon Rain ceremony in April, which was held at the Aruba Marriott Resort. Mr Griffith received the award for his contribution to charitable activities in Aruba such as for Fundacion Ban Uni Man Pa Cria Nos Muchanan

and for his contribution to the creation and work of Divi Impact Foundation since 2010.

Griffith was General Manager of the Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort. 43 years he had been working for Divi Resorts and the last seven he was the General Manager of Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort. □



Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)'s Board Meeting: strategizing nature conservation

WILLEMSTAD — The Board of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) recently held their first Board Meeting for 2021 in a mixed virtual and in-person setting, making decisions and discussing strategies crucial to the ensuring of the continuation of the conservation management activities executed by the Park Management Organizations of all six islands of the Dutch Caribbean. Originally an in-person meeting was planned for Sint Maarten, but due to a spike in COVID19 cases on the ABC islands it was decided to host a mixed meeting, with some members joining from Sint Maarten while others joined from their respective home locations throughout the Dutch Caribbean and the Netherlands.

The DCNA Board meetings are critical for discussing and strategizing on the most effective way to support protected area management organizations in the Dutch Caribbean, especially in light of the significant challenges brought about by the global Covid-19 pandemic and other pressures faced by the Park Management Organizations. Park Management Organizations also had the opportunity to update each other on some of the challenges and successes the parks are experiencing as they continue to safeguard nature in the Dutch Caribbean. Various governance decisions were also taken including decisions related to financial good-governance, the disbursement of the Conservation Trust Fund and the support the DCNA network provides in terms of its regional and international lobby on

behalf of the conservation organizations in the Dutch Caribbean.

The DCNA conservation network, provides support to the Protected Area Management Organizations on all six islands of the Dutch Caribbean: Aruba National Parks Foundation, STINAPA Bonaire, CARMABI Curaçao, STENAPA St. Eustatius, the Saba Conservation Foundation and the Sint Maarten Nature Foundation. Another critical component discussed during the Board Meeting is the importance of implementing a strategy which will help foster the development of sustainable tourism for the islands, enabling the Dutch Caribbean to emerge from the challenges brought about by the Pandemic with a greater focus on green and blue economies. Aside from conservation managers and the various experts of the Board of DCNA, observers from World Wild Fund for Nature the Netherlands (WWF-NL), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN-NL), BirdLife Netherlands, Observation International and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) also participated in the last DCNA Board Meeting.

The next DCNA Convention is planned on the 22-24th of November in Curaçao. The DCNA convention not only has the DCNA Board Meeting on the agenda, but also several workshops for the protected area management organizations from the six Dutch Caribbean islands, bringing scientific institutions, local stakeholders and youth nature ambassadors together for knowledge exchange and capacity building. □

Online info session: "Creative Europe"



ORANJESTAD - The Office for Relations with the European Union and the Kingdom (Europe House Aruba) invites everyone in the media and culture sector who want to broaden their horizons and collaborate internationally to participate in the online information session about the fund program of the European Union "Creative Europe".

The European Commission has approved a multi-fund program for the period 2021-2027.

"Creative Europe" is a fund in which active organizations in the relevant sectors of media and culture can participate.

"Creative Europe" is a European Union funding program that supports the cultural and audiovisual sector. Their aim is to develop and promote cultural and linguistic diversity, preserve heritage and increase competitiveness and economic potential in the cultural and creative sector, especially in the audiovisual sector. Collaborative projects, new platforms to promote new artists, cultural and creative organizational networks, television, film distribution and cinematography education are just some of the opportunities offered by this fund that helps artists, musicians, press and film activists.

"Creative Europe" also aims to increase competitiveness in the cultural sector by supporting their efforts to become greener, more digital and more inclusive.

Do you want to know more?

During the online interactive session on Saturday, which is organized by "Dutch Culture", information is provided about matters that may be important to you and your organization. Information is also available on European themes that are relevant to new programs and channels that are launched and that may be inspired by projects approved by the Netherlands in the past.

Date: June 14, 2021
Time: 9.00 – 23.00 on Youtube
Language: Dutch

For more information and registration, please contact info@arubagovernment.eu or visit www.europe-housearuba.org. □

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As children return to classrooms, stores expect strong sales

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As more children go back to the physical classroom and families look to restart their lives, back-to-school spending this year could top pre-pandemic levels, according to one key spending measure.

Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all payment forms including cash, forecasts that spending will be up 5.5% between July 15 and Sept. 6. That's compared with the year-ago period when sales were up a modest 1.2% as the pandemic wreaked havoc on schools' reopening plans and back-to-school shopping.

In a more telling sign of a rebound, back-to-school sales should increase 6.7% on a two-year basis, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse. The figures exclude sales from autos and gas.

Last year, parents focused their spending online and bought supplies and electronics to help their children set up work stations at home. When it came to apparel, they limited their purchases to sweatpants and other comfy clothes for their kids and avoided department stores.

The rosy forecast issued Thursday comes as retail-



In this May 18, 2021 file photo, fifth graders wear face masks are seated at proper social distancing spacing during a music class at the Milton Elementary School in Rye, N.Y.

Associated Press

ers, particularly mall-based stores, are seeing a strong recovery as newly vaccinated shoppers feel safe going out and socializing. On Wednesday, the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, sharply revised its annual outlook for retail sales. It now expects the increase to be anywhere from 10.5% to 13.5% compared to an earlier forecast made in February of at least 6.5%.

"The economy and consumer spending have proven to be much more

resilient than initially forecasted," Matthew Shay, president and CEO of the retail trade group, said in a statement. "The combination of vaccine distribution, fiscal stimulus and private-sector ingenuity have put millions of Americans back to work."

While NRF noted risks related to worker shortages, an overheating economy, tax increases and overregulation, it pointed out that overall households are healthier, and consumers are showing their ability and willingness to spend.

The downside is that many retailers may not be able to fully capitalize on this sudden surge of spending. For many items produced overseas, stores had to place their orders at least six months ago, and they were conservative, says Steve Sadove, senior adviser for Mastercard and former CEO and chairman of Saks Inc. He also cited the logjam at ports, making it difficult for retailers to bring in goods to their stores.

"The supply chain is backed up. The ports are backed up," he said. "You're going

to find scarcity." He said that a number of retailers he has spoken to are having to air ship items instead of transport them by boat in order to have them in stores in time for back-to-school.

For this back-to-school season, Sadove said clothing should enjoy a stronger-than-expected rebound, with Mastercard SpendingPulse forecasting a 78.2% sales increase compared with last year. On a two-year basis, the figure is expected to be up 11.3%. Sadove said that retailers are seeing a shift in consumer spending toward trendier items like cropped tops and mini skirts.

Sadove told The AP that department stores are reaping the benefits of their moves to expand into online services like allowing online shoppers to pick up orders at the stores. They're also expanding into new categories like wellness.

Consumer electronics should have strong sales growth compared to a year ago and on a two-year basis. But online sales are expected to drop 6.6% for this period compared to last year when shoppers focused mostly on buying online. Still, that figure should be up 53.2% on a two-year basis, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse. □

End of an era: American will drop its in-flight magazine

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — After more than half a century in airplane seatback pockets, the American Airlines in-flight magazine American Way is going away. An airline spokeswoman said Friday that American will retire the magazine and its online version at the end of June.

American says it's the oldest continuously published magazine in the airline industry, dating back to 1966. American Way went from yearly to quarterly and then monthly, filled with stories about the airline, destinations it served, and an assortment of other features. There were also airport terminal maps and other information toward the back. It spawned imitators at many other airlines. The pandemic hastened the de-

mise of in-flight magazines, as airlines pulled them last year to prevent people from thumbing through pages that had been touched by other passengers. Delta and Southwest dropped theirs, and British Airways stopped stocking paper copies of "High Life" while keeping the online version.

But the days of the in-flight magazine were numbered anyway, as passengers began spending more time browsing other information and entertainment on their phones, tablets and laptops. American said it will provide other in-flight programming to give customers "more of what they want" while reducing paper waste and unnecessary weight on planes. □



This Dec. 19, 2017, photo shows the American Airlines logo on top of the American Airlines Center in Dallas.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Agitates

1 Info 43 Put in

5 Thanks-giving dish 44 Beholds

9 Enthusiasm

10 Striped rock

12 Moved cautiously

13 Musical closes

14 Leafy vegetable

16 Print measures

17 Load unit

18 Leafy vegetable

20 Idolized

22 Start the bidding

23 Stand

25 Quite bright

28 Account book

32 Leafy vegetable

34 Keats work

35 Morse bit

36 Leafy vegetable

38 Moscow setting

40 Suffered

41 Daughter of Lear



Yesterday's answer

11 German steel city

15 François

19 — the line (obeyed)

21 Tolloed

24 Atlantic fish

25 Low point

26 Under-mines

27 Power problem

29 Man in a mask

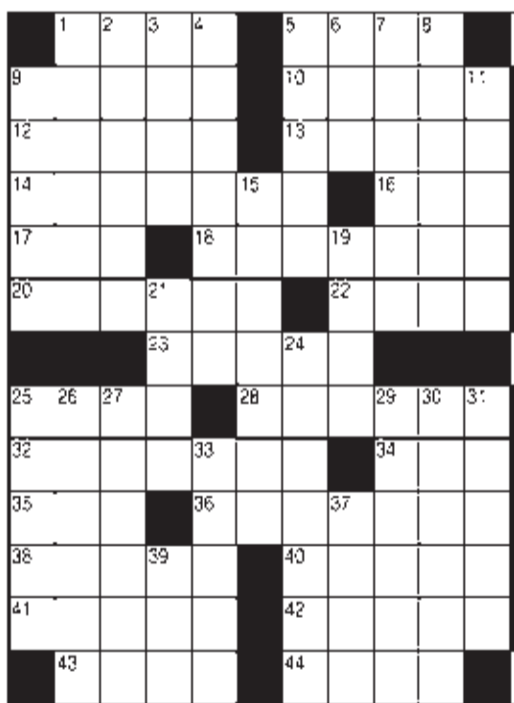
30 Yard tools

31 Oboists' needs

33 Home of the Huskies

37 Fisher-man's hope

39 Hem and —



6-12

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

VLA'W BEI XLE K JKA NCL'P

HDXW ILG. WCD ADZW LAD

JKI XKHH XLE ILGE PJUHD.

— JKD NDPW

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I DIG MY FINGERS DEEP INTO THE SOFT EARTH. I CAN FEEL ITS ENERGY, AND MY SPIRITS SOAR. — HELEN HAYES



The antenna of an Argos satellite tag extends past the tail feathers of a female American robin as she feeds a worm to her hungry nestlings on a front porch in Cheverly, Md., Sunday, May 9, 2021. Associated Press

Scientists hail golden age to trace bird migration with tech

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP Science Writer

TAKOMA PARK, Md. (AP) —

A plump robin wearing a tiny metal backpack with an antenna hops around a suburban yard in Takoma Park, then plucks a cicada from the ground for a snack.

Ecologist Emily Williams watches through binoculars from behind a bush. On this clear spring day, she's snooping on his dating life. "Now I'm watching to see whether he's found a mate," she said, scrutinizing his interactions with another robin in a nearby tree.

Once the bird moves on at season's end, she'll rely on the backpack to beam frequent location data to the Argos satellite, then back to Williams' laptop, to track it. The goal is to unravel why some American robins migrate long distances, but others do not. With more precise information about nesting success and conditions in breeding and wintering grounds, "we should be able to tell the relative roles of genetics versus the environment in shaping why birds migrate," said Williams, who is based at Georgetown University.

Putting beacons on birds is not novel. But a new antenna on the International Space Station and recep-

tors on the Argos satellite, plus the shrinking size of tracking chips and batteries, are allowing scientists to remotely monitor songbird movements in much greater detail than ever before.

"We're in a sort of golden age for bird research," said Adriaan Dokter, an ecologist at Cornell University who is not directly involved with Williams' study. "It's pretty amazing that we can satellite-track a robin with smaller and smaller chips. Ten years ago, that was unthinkable."

The device this robin is wearing can give precise locations, within about 30 feet (about 10 meters), instead of around 125 miles (200 kilometers) for previous generations of tags. That means Williams can tell not only whether the bird is still in the city, but on which street or backyard. Or whether it's flown from the Washington, D.C., suburbs to land on the White House lawn.

A second new tag, for only the heaviest robins, includes an accelerometer to provide information about the bird's movements; future versions may also measure humidity and barometric pressure. These Icarus tags work with a new antenna on the Interna-

tional Space Station. That antenna was first turned on about two years ago, "but there were some glitches with the power-supply and the computer, so we had to bring it down again with a Russian rocket, then transport it from Moscow to Germany to fix it," said Martin Wikelski, director of the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior, whose scientific team is honing the technology. After "the usual troubleshooting for space science," the antenna was turned back on this spring.

As researchers deploy precision tags, Wikelski envisions the development of "an 'Internet of animals' — a collection of sensors around the world giving us a better picture of the movement of life on the planet."

The American robin is an iconic songbird in North America, its bright chirp a harbinger of spring. Yet its migratory habits remain a bit mysterious to scientists.

"It's astounding how little we know about some of the most common songbirds," said Ken Rosenberg, a conservation scientist at Cornell University. "We have a general idea of migration, a range map, but that's really just a broad impression." □

Google offers UK watchdog role in browser cookie phase-out



In this Monday, Nov. 5, 2018 file photo, a woman walks past the logo for Google at the China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Google is offering U.K. regulators a role overseeing its phasing out of ad-tracking technology from its Chrome browser, in a package of commitments the tech giant is proposing to apply globally to head off a competition investigation. The U.K. competition watchdog has been investigating Google's proposals to remove so-called third-party cookies over concerns they would undermine digital ad competition and entrench the company's market power. To address the concerns, Google on Friday offered a set of commitments including giving the Competition and Markets Authority an oversight role as the company designs and develops a replacement technology.

"The emergence of tech giants such as Google has presented competition authorities around the world with new challenges that require a new approach," Andrea Coscelli, the watchdog's chief executive, said.

The Competition and Markets Authority will work with tech companies to "shape their behaviour and protect competition to the benefit of consumers," he said.

Google's promises also include "substantial limits" on how Google will use and combine individual user data for digital ad purposes and a pledge not to discriminate against rivals in favor of its own ad businesses with the new technology.

If Google's commitments are accepted, they will be applied globally, the company said in a blog post. Third-party cookies - snippets of code that log user info - are used to help businesses more effectively target advertising and fund free online content such as newspapers. However, they've also been a long-

standing source of privacy concerns because they can be used to track users across the internet.

Google shook up the digital ad industry with its plan to do away with third-party cookies, which raised fears newer technology would leave even less room for online ad rivals. The plan involves replacing "individual identifiers" with techniques that hide users in large online groups based on their interests while keeping web browsing histories on devices to maintain privacy.

The competition watchdog will seek feedback until July from other players in the tech and digital

Associated Press



ad industry on Google's commitments. Then it will decide whether to accept Google's offer and close the competition case.

Google has been busy grappling with a wave tide of antitrust investigations in Europe. The U.K. offer comes days after it resolved another case involving its digital ad business, when it agreed to pay a 220 million euro (\$268 million) to France's antitrust watchdog for abusing its 'dominant' position in online advertising. □



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'In the Heights' lifts hopes for a Latino film breakthrough



This combination of photos shows actors, from left, John Leguizamo, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Rita Moreno and Anthony Ramos.

Associated Press

By **SIGAL RATNER-ARIAS**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Color. Dance. Music. Joy. An all Latino cast!

The hype for "In the Heights" has brought great expectation for Latinos in the United States, a group that's been historically underrepresented and widely typecast in films. And with upcoming titles like "Cinderella" with Cuban-American singer Camila Cabello, "The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard" with Mexican star Salma Hayek and Steven Spielberg's revival of "West Side Story," this seems to be just the beginning of a string of productions that place Latinos front and center.

"In the Heights," which opens Friday, is an adaptation of the Tony-award winning musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegría Hudes about the hopes and struggles of residents of New York City's Washington Heights. Directed by Jon M. Chu ("Crazy Rich Asians"), many hope it will mark a new beginning on the big screen for the largest minority group in the country — one that mirrors shifts that have already happened for Black and Asian actors and creators. "You know, every decade there's, 'Is this movie gonna break through? Or is this particular music style gonna break through? Or this particular performer or singer? Are they gonna open the doors for a kind

of explosion?'," says Jimmy Smits, who is of Puerto Rican descent. "I think the dynamics right now in terms of where we are culturally, just in terms of our population, and the potential economic power that we have, ... the universe aligned in a nice way.

"You have this beautiful collage of people in the community," says Smits, the star of "NYPD Blue" and "West Wing" who plays Kevin Rosario, a single father and the owner a taxi cab service, in "In the Heights." "It's the immigrant experience that's been part of the fabric of this country since it started. And it's positive. So we need that right now after the pandemic." John Leguizamo agrees.

"I think that 'In the Heights' is gonna be THE project that changes the whole thing finally," says the Colombian-American actor and playwright, who started his career on film and television but, like Miranda, found a place to tell his stories — and validation of this work — on and off Broadway.

Leguizamo, who won a special Tony Award in 2018 for his commitment to bringing diverse stories and audiences to Broadway through his one-man shows including "Freak," "Ghetto Klown" and "Latin History for Morons," says he's been pitching stories to Hollywood for 30-plus years.

"I started to believe that maybe I don't know how

to write, maybe I just don't know how to pitch, cause all my stories were rejected," he says. "And then I started to realize, 'Oh my God, it's because it was Latin content! They didn't know what to do with it.

"They weren't rejecting my ability, there were rejecting my culture."

He found success on the stage "because there aren't any gatekeepers in theater," he says. "I just needed to write something dope, get somebody to produce it and the audience was so hungry for it. They were dying to see themselves!"

About 60.6 million Hispanics live in the United States, the Census Bureau estimates. And many are devoted filmgoers: Latinos have consistently led the box office, reaching 29% of tickets sold, according to the latest Motion Picture Association report on theatergoers. Yet they only represent 4.5% of all speaking or named characters and a mere 3% of lead or co-lead actors, a 2019 study of 1,200 popular movies from 2007 to 2018 by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative found.

"I think our absence at the Oscars was appalling," Leguizamo says. "(But) the Oscars is the symptom; the disease is Hollywood. We need more Latin executives making decisions."

In 1951, Puerto Rican José Ferrer became the first Latino actor to receive an Academy Award for his

leading role in "Cyrano de Bergerac." The same decade, Mexican-born Anthony Quinn got two for best supporting actor, for "Viva Zapata!" (1953) and "Lust for Life" (1957). Puerto Rican Rita Moreno became the first Latina to get the best supporting actress award in 1962 as Anita in "West Side Story."

Since then, only one more Latino has been recognized in the supporting actor category: Puerto Rican Benicio del Toro for 2000's "Traffic." Spaniards Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz got supporting roles awards in 2008 and 2009, for "No Country for Old Men" and "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," respectively. Kenyan actor Lupita Nyong'o, who was born in Mexico, won the same prize in 2014 for "12 Years a Slave."

No Latina has won best actress at the Oscars, and few have even been considered. Hayek was nominated for the English-language movie "Frida," but other contenders competed for performances in foreign language films: Fernanda Montenegro for Brazil's "Central Station," Catalina Sandino Moreno for Colombia's "Maria Full of Grace" and Yalitza Aparicio for Mexico's "Roma."

Rita Moreno, an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony winner whose career spans seven decades, says she has seen huge progress for women and other minorities in Hollywood.

"What still concerns me mightily and profoundly is that Hispanics haven't gotten their hold on our profession," she says in an interview ahead of the release of the documentary "Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided to Go for It." "I don't know what the hell is wrong. I don't know what is not working right. The Black community has done incredibly, and I have nothing but the deepest admiration for the Black professional community. They've done it. And I think we can take some lessons from them. But where is our 'Moonlight'? Why are we not advancing?"

Moreno noted that Hispanic identity is often rooted in specific countries.

"It's very complicated. People forget that we're not just Hispanic," she says.

"Maybe the answer, or the beginning of the answer, lies in some kind of summit." At 89, and despite all the titles coming this year, she doesn't expect to see this happen in her lifetime: "My age forbids it. But I sure as hell hope something happens. I can't believe we're still struggling the way we are." Behind the camera, many Latin American artists have been recognized at the Oscars in different areas, most recently and prominently "The Three Amigos" — Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo del Toro, all Academy Award winning directors from Mexico. □

Olympic, professional boxing champ Shields wins MMA debut

By DAN GELSTON

AP Sports Writer

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)

— Claressa Shields found herself pinned on her back, stuck against a cage and she absorbed so many strikes to the head that the undefeated boxer seemed on the brink of defeat in MMA.

"I could have went home with an L like that," Shields said.

So, she dug deep in her debut for the fortitude that took her from Flint, Michigan, to Olympic gold — twice — and then a pro career that made her the most decorated fighter of her time.

"I got myself going with those big right hands," she said. "My right hand has never failed me."

From the squared circle to the cage, Shields had her mighty hand take over — and had it raised in victory. Shields made short work of Brittney Elkin, and the mixed martial arts novice proved she might have a future in the sport with a TKO win on Thursday night in the main event of a Professional Fighters League card.

"I'm not losing this fight," the undefeated boxer said. Shields proved in her 155-pound lightweight fight she's just as adept at unleashing a beating in mixed martial arts. She shook off a slow first two rounds before she got Elkin on the ground and needed a few heavy shots to cause the decisive damage. She earned the win with a right hand from the top at 1:44 of the third round.

"I feel like I am dreaming. This is crazy," she said.

Shields ditched some of the flamboyant costumes she's worn in boxing (where she's 11-0) for straight red trunks and top. She still wore her hair in a blue ponytail to raise awareness to the clean water fight that's gone on for years in her Michigan hometown.



Claressa Shields, top, punches Brittney Elkin during a Professional Fighters League mixed martial arts bout in Atlantic City, N.J., early Friday, June 11, 2021.

She already won the light middleweight, middleweight and super middleweight crowns in her boxing career and was the fastest fighter in history — either male or female — to become a three-division world champion. Shields only started her MMA training in December at the Jackson Wink MMA Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Shields calls herself the GWOAT — yes, the Greatest Woman Of All Time, At least in boxing.

In MMA, her inexperience showed early. Elkin took Shields down early in the first round and mounted her as she pounded the rookie in the face. Shields took more of a beating in one round than she did over most of her pro boxing career.

Elkin landed a big right early in the second that did little to rattle Shields. Elkin went back to the mount and

kept the career boxer on her back. Shields escaped trouble late in the second and swung and missed on a wild right before she connected on more head shots that set the stage for the third round.

"I kept hitting her, kept hitting her," Shields said. "I told myself, keep hitting her until she quits."

Shields won Olympic gold in 2012 in London and repeated the feat four years later in Rio de Janeiro.

Shields cut a wide swath of fans: 76ers center Dwight Howard wrote "Let's go champ" on Instagram and actress Rosie Perez tweeted "Best of luck tonight." Ray Lewis, who has an equity stake in PFL and serves on its advisory board, watched cage-side and admired Shields' decision to shift to MMA while still in the prime of her boxing career.

"The genius of champions making transitions is they

start all over and don't care," said Lewis, the Hall of Fame linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens. "Lot of people are afraid to start over. They end their careers, I'm stuck, I'm good. But when you make that transition, you're chasing something else. I think she's chasing something else and just that's good to see. I just love her adapting to it."

CEO Peter Murray said Shields would fight one more time this year for PFL before a decision was made for 2022.

"This is just her first step to prove to herself that she has really what it takes to make the '22 season," Murray said.

One potential dream match for 2022 in the PFL would have Shields fight Kayla Harrison. Harrison, a two-time Olympic judo gold medalist, has emerged as the face of PFL. Harrison (9-0) fights again on June 25. "We think that's a pay-per-view fight," Murray said. "That starts tonight."

Unlike other MMA organizations, the PFL uses a season format, with playoffs and a championship fight

night that awards a \$1 million prize for each of its six weight class champions. Four fighters each in PFL's featherweight and men's lightweight division advanced on Thursday. Shields was billed as fighting in PFL's first showcase fight.

Murray said that PPV is on the horizon for PFL. Thursday's card aired on ESPN2, and the league has yet to decide when or where it will stage its championship fight night. The PFL held its two previous finales on Dec. 31 in New York. Murray said the fight card could come before December. □

Associated Press



Djokovic hands Nadal 3rd loss in 108 French Open matches



Serbia's Novak Djokovic, left, shakes hands with Spain's Rafael Nadal after their semifinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium Friday, June 11, 2021 in Paris. Novak Djokovic won 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Associated Press

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**
AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Sprinting, sliding and stretching, anticipating each other's moves for four sets and more than four hours, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal produced a masterpiece in the French Open semifinals. Djokovic, as it happens, is one of only two men in tennis history who knows what it takes to beat Nadal at Roland Garros. And now Djokovic has done it twice — this time ending Nadal's bid for a 14th championship there and record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title overall by coming back to win their 58th career matchup 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-2 on Friday night.

"Just one of these nights and matches that you will remember forever," said the top-seeded Djokovic, who trailed 2-0 in the closing set before reeling off the last half-dozen games to reach his sixth final at the clay-court major tournament.

"Definitely the best match that I was part of ever in Roland Garros, for me, and (one of the) top-three

matches that I ever played in my entire career — considering quality of tennis, playing my biggest rival on the court where he has had so much success and has been the dominant force in the last 15-plus years," Djokovic said, "and the atmosphere, which was completely electric."

It was Nadal's third loss in 108 matches at a tournament he won each of the last four years, including by beating Djokovic in the 2020 final.

Nadal's first defeat at the French Open came against Robin Soderling in 2009; the next against Djokovic in 2015.

"Each time you step on the court with him," Djokovic said, "you know that you have to kind of climb Mt. Everest to win against this guy here."

And to think: There wasn't even a trophy at stake in this one. That will happen Sunday, when Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, faces Stefanos Tsitsipas, a 22-year-old from Greece.

The fifth-seeded Tsitsipas edged sixth-seeded Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-3, 4-6,

4-6, 6-3 earlier Friday to reach his first Grand Slam final. It's Djokovic's 29th as he seeks a second title at the French Open and 19th major championship overall to pull within one of the men's Slam mark shared by Nadal and Roger Federer. Tsitsipas already had given away all of a two-set lead in his semifinal Friday when he double-faulted to trail love-40 in the opening game of the fifth. But Tsitsipas steeled himself to win five consecutive points, then broke to go up 3-1.

"I'm someone who fights. I was not willing to give up yet. I think I did few things right that worked in my favor," said Tsitsipas, who entered the day 0-3 in major semifinals.

"It was a breath of fresh air, that first game," he said. "I felt revitalized."

His semifinal offered a measure of drama. But in truth, Tsitsipas-Zverev was merely an opening act before the headliners.

Nadal and Djokovic really riled up the raucous crowd at Court Philippe Chatrier. Midway through the third set, Djokovic won a

23-stroke point with a forehand winner and wind-milled his arms a half-dozen times, earning a standing ovation and chants of "No-vak! No-vak!" On the very next point, Nadal produced a forehand winner and screamed, prompting chants of "Ra-fa! Ra-fa!" and a wave in the stands. That set alone lasted 1 hour, 33 minutes, and an 11 p.m. nationwide curfew in place because of COVID-19 was approaching. Djokovic's previous match had been delayed more than 20 minutes while the audience — limited to 5,000 people under coronavirus restrictions — was cleared out of the stadium, but an announcement was made Friday to let everyone know the government agreed to let them stay until the end of the match.

Earlier chants in French of "We won't leave!" were replaced by choruses of the national anthem and cheers of thanks for President Emmanuel Macron. Nadal noted afterward that playing in the cooler night air meant balls bounced lower, lessening

the effect of his lefty forehand's heavy topspin.

"That's more favorable for him, the conditions," Nadal said. "By the way, doesn't matter. That's tennis. The player who get used to the conditions better is the player who deserve to win. So no doubt, he deserved to win."

The intensity was palpable from the outset of the evening, and Nadal zoomed to a 5-0 lead, reminiscent of last year's final, which he won 6-0, 6-2, 7-5. That was only the fourth shutout set lost by Djokovic in 341 career Grand Slam matches up to that point — and the first in a major final.

There wouldn't be another Friday, because Djokovic made two key tactical adjustments — moving much further back than usual to return serve and deciding to focus on serving toward Nadal's backhand — and quickly made clear this would be a classic between two of the greatest ever at what they do.

They defended in ways rarely seen. Found the right mix of power and touch. Conjured up impossible-at-first-glance winners that no one else would try, let alone successfully employ. Returned as well as anyone, combining to generate 38 break points.

No two men in the professional era, which dates to 1968, have played each other more than this duo (Djokovic now leads 30-28). They know each other, and each other's strengths and weaknesses and patterns, so well.

Back-and-forth they went — from game to game, point to point, shot to shot. Through exchanges that lasted 10 strokes, 20 strokes, more, they created marvelous points, too many to count — or recount.

Djokovic shrugged off his early hole. He saved a set point while down 6-5 in the third. Nadal recovered from the dropped tiebreaker to steal a break at the beginning of the fourth. But Djokovic broke back to 2-all and was on his way. "Something clicked," Djokovic said. □